

Published and Copyright (c) 1999 - 2011
All Rights Reserved

Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
Dana P. Jacobson, Publisher/Managing Editor
Joseph Mirando, Managing Editor
Rob Mahlert, Associate Editor

Atari Online News, Etc. Staff

Dana P. Jacobson -- Editor
Joe Mirando -- "People Are Talking"
Michael Burkley -- "Unabashed Atariophile"
Albert Dayes -- "CC: Classic Chips"
Rob Mahlert -- Web site
Thomas J. Andrews -- "Keeper of the Flame"

With Contributions by:

Fred Horvat

To subscribe to A-ONE, change e-mail addresses, or unsubscribe,
log on to our website at: www.atarinews.org
and click on "Subscriptions".
OR subscribe to A-ONE by sending a message to: dpj@atarinews.org
and your address will be added to the distribution list.
To unsubscribe from A-ONE, send the following: Unsubscribe A-ONE
Please make sure that you include the same address that you used to
subscribe from.

To download A-ONE, set your browser bookmarks to one of the
following sites:

<http://people.delphiforums.com/dpj/a-one.htm>
Now available:
<http://www.atarinews.org>

Visit the Atari Advantage Forum on Delphi!
<http://forums.delphiforums.com/atari/>

=~::~~::~=

~ Videogame Killer Jailed ~ New Xbox Due in 2013? ~ MySpace A Mistake!

```

- * Stand Up for Your Freedom! *-
- * IRS Auditing Google Shifted Profits *-
- * Jobs' Memorial Salutes "The Crazy Ones"! *-

```

$$= \sim = \sim = \sim =$$

```
->From the Editor's Keyboard          "Saying it like it is!"
   " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " "
```

Fall is definitely in the air lately - rain, windy, cooler temps - and of course, plenty of leaves turning color and falling to the ground! It's a nice time of the year, but unfortunately, it's a harbinger of what's to come, winter! Still, I enjoy the relief of the cooler weather; it's more easy to handle the clean-up of leaves for the next few weeks! And, I still have a little more time to get my snow thrower tuned-up!

Not much happening this week, if you ignore the dramatic changes throughout the world lately. You've read the news, so I won't comment (for a change). What I'm waiting to hear is news of even more "revolutionary" aspects in our own country. Some kind of "change" is necessary in this country before there really is a revolution of sorts! And I don't think a presidential election, and potential change in the office, will be enough! But that's another story for another time!

Until next time...

$$= \sim = \sim = \sim =$$

```
->In This Week's Gaming Section - New Xbox due in 2013?
    " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " PS Vita Release Date!
                                                Batman: Arkham City!
                                                And more!
```

$$= \sim = \sim = \sim =$$

->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

New Xbox Due in 2013?

Ok everyone, prepare yourselves for something incredible - a new rumor

about the next generation of consoles! Take a moment to regain your composure.

There have been a whole lot of rumors regarding the debut of the next Xbox (lovingly referred to as the Xbox 720 by everyone but Microsoft), as well as the PlayStation 4. It makes sense, and even if there weren't any reports to back up those rumors the speculation would be running wild because of the time table alone - not to mention the coming of the Wii U.

A new report coming out of Develop claims that a date has been tentatively planned by Microsoft. If the report is accurate, the next Xbox will be unveiled at E3 2013, with a planned launch window of that holiday season, or early 2014.

The news would be the first confirmation of a release window, but it isn't surprising. The Xbox 360 debuted in November 2005, and Microsoft has said that it has a ten year plan for their console. A 2013 release would make for an eight year gap, plus, a new console release doesn't mean that support for the Xbox 360 will immediately stop.

If the console is released in late 2013, it will likely be at least two years before the Xbox 360 comes close to ending its support, probably more. The release date also fits with some of the rumors we have been hearing regarding several Xbox-exclusive developers. Recently an Alan Wake sequel was said to be in development, but it will be for the next generation of console. Lionshead, developer of the Fable franchise and Turn 10, developer of the Forza series, are also said to be developing their next titles for the next-gen.

And if the Xbox 720 is coming in 2013, the PlayStation 4 can't be far behind. The year lead that Sony gave to Microsoft has proven to be a massive advantage - at least in America, where the 360 has a huge lead in terms of sales. Sony is killing it in Japan, but can't afford to give any more ground to its competitor.

Originally most assumed that the next Xbox would be released in 2015, but evidence has been mounting that the console will be revealed much sooner than that. The next batch of rumors put both the next Xbox and the PS4 in 2014, then the reports seemed to suggest that both the next Xbox and the PS4 would hit in 2012. A new series of job placement ads on LinkedIn seem to confirm that work is moving ahead at full steam, but 2013 seems like a more realistic target.

The likely reasoning behind the faster development cycle is the Wii U, which is due sometime in 2012. The Wii U will not be as powerful as what most are expecting with the next Xbox and the PS4, but it will be a significant increase over the Xbox 360 and PS3, not to mention the current Wii. The question is, are fans willing to upgrade?

Sales on the Wii have been dropping steadily for a while now, and an update to at least include HD graphics is a must. But the 360 and PS3 both just seem to be hitting their strides. In general, graphics can always be improved, but the systems are both continuing to introduce new features and expand their online footprints. Neither system seems to be close to reaching its maximum potential. With game sales already slumping, and the economy not exactly awesome, will people be willing to shell out several hundred dollars for another new system? Not to mention the games, which, if they follow the pattern of the previous generations, will raise in price, possibly to \$70 a title.

The fear of losing a head start and surrendering too much of a lead to Nintendo will likely push both Microsoft and Sony to release their next consoles sooner than they had originally intended. Whether that is a good thing though, remains to be seen.

Sony Announces Playstation Vita Release Date for U.S. and Europe

Mark your calendars, gamers: Sony's Playstation Vita will hit shelves February 22 in the U.S. and Europe.

The official release date for Sony's successor to the Playstation Portable handheld gaming system was announced earlier this week by the company, ending months of speculation and rumors.

According to the statement from Sony, the Vita will be available in two versions at launch: a \$250 Wi-Fi model and a \$300 model which can use Wi-Fi and 3G service. It is not clear how many Vita games will be available at launch, though there are over 100 currently in development.

Rumors spawned by online retailer pre-orders had the Vita pegged for a December 31 release, though Sony Corp. Executive Vice President Kazuo Hiraishi indicated back in August that the system would hit the U.S. and European markets in "early 2012."

Along with various smartphone-inspired apps for social media and other tools, the PS Vita features a five-inch, multi-touch screen, front and rear cameras, two thumbstick controls, a rear touch pad, SixAxis motion controls, and GPS support.

What it doesn't feature at this point, however, is support for the Universal Media Disc format used for Playstation Portable games and movies - though Sony has indicated that it is considering methods of easing PSP users (and their UMD libraries) transition to the new system.

Batman: Arkham City Review

I'm going to make this really, really easy for you: If you like video games with solid action and vividly detailed 3D worlds, you're going to be buying Batman: Arkham City. Bear in mind, that is not a recommendation. You know about the game already. You know its 2009 predecessor Batman: Arkham Asylum was stellar, and that this sequel's more open world and diverse array of characters is a step forward. You were sold on the game long before you clicked into this review.

I'm basically here to confirm what you already knew: Arkham City, for any of its minor warts or shortfalls, is easily a Game of the Year contender.

The new game's story finds Gotham's Dark Knight exploring the confines of Arkham City, an open-air prison built into a walled-off, crumbling section of the city. The worst of the worst criminals can be found here, which amounts to roughly everyone in the Batman rogue's gallery. The Joker is of course a returning villain and the Riddler is up to his old tricks - albeit in a much more expanded role - but most of the ugly mugs you'll be beating into submission as the story unfolds weren't seen in the first

game.

Things aren't going well in Arkham City, and when Two-Face captures, then plans to publicly execute Catwoman. Meanwhile Batman has his own problems when his civie identity of Bruce Wayne is targeted by an old enemy. All roads lead to Arkham City, and once inside Batman must save Catwoman, as well as uncover what his enemies are planning before the cryptic 'Protocol 10' is enacted.

The basic gameplay is largely unchanged at the most fundamental level, which makes sense given how effective the first game was at letting players feel like they can be Batman. You start with almost all of the gadgets that were obtained by the end of Asylum. Some are missing, waiting to be obtained as the story progresses, and some are simply new. Overall however, there are very few surprises on the utility belt side of things.

If there's any surprise, it's the sequel's dramatically enlarged scope. Unlike Asylum's relatively small outdoor areas separating the different mission spaces, Arkham City delivers a proper open world. The only load screens you'll see come up when you transition between indoor and outdoor spaces. To the game's credit, those load times tend to be pretty minimal, as are the ones you face when reloading a checkpoint.

The city is filled with all manner of activities to keep Bats busy. In addition to the central story, there are a dozen or so villain-specific side missions that unfold in multiple stages and put Batman's various abilities to the test. Even when the action calms down and the World's Greatest Detective does his thing, the challenges you're faced with are much more elaborate than following a trail of glowing breadcrumbs (though you'll do some of that as well).

There are also more than 400 Riddler trophies to be found, many of which require you to use the various gadgets in your utility belt. As you solve the various puzzles built around these Riddler trophies, you'll unlock new combat and stealth challenge rooms. There are other challenge rooms as well, specific to the game's other playable character.

Those who buy Arkham City new get to punch in a redemption code that adds a four-chapter Catwoman-centric story into the game. She becomes a playable character during certain sections of the story, and you'll be able to swap between her and Batman in specific locations once the main plot has been completed.

The controls are fundamentally the same between the two characters, but Catwoman is much more agile than the Dark Knight. Instead of a grappling hook, she's equipped with a whip that can be used to quickly and easily traverse the empty spans between buildings. She can also crawl on the ceilings in certain areas, and she's got a unique, more combat-oriented set of tools to draw from. There's value in exploring the city in Selina Kyle's shoes, since there are red Riddler trophies that are specific to her and her abilities.

Finishing the game once unlocks a New Game Plus mode, which carries over all of your gadgets and Riddler challenge data into a new, separate save. Enemies are tougher and random encounters feature a wider range of weapons and enemy types. In addition, the counter indicator no longer pops up, meaning you'll have to rely on other visual cues in order to successfully redirect an incoming attack.

For all of Arkham City's resounding successes, there are a few stumbles.

The main story, is a mess in some fundamental ways. Certain points aren't clearly explained or just go unresolved. There's also a been-there-done-that feeling to some of the broader overarching story strokes. The endgame takes a bit of a risky gamble that ultimately pays off, but the impact will be cheapened for those who aren't able to form a connection with the larger story.

Fortunately, the side missions fare considerably better. Interestingly, the wide range of missions and unconnected storylines in Arkham City serve to enhance the game's connection with its comic book roots. Each of the villain-centric side missions and even the main story all feel like individual arcs pulled straight from the comics. Some are better than others, but the sheer variety at play in this game's various stories prevents any weak links in the chain - even the main narrative's weak link - from ruining everything.

I also didn't particularly care for the way upgrades are rationed out as you play. The RPG-lite experience system works for this game, but the assortment of unlockable abilities that Batman has access to is underwhelming. You're very much being ushered along a largely linear path; while there are some choices to be made, none of the level-based unlocks feel particularly impactful or game-changing.

The question every reviewer faces with Arkham City is whether we should reward iteration over innovation. Asylum was practically perfect as video games go, offering up a compelling experience that was well-executed, fun to play and true to its source. Is it fair to come down on Arkham City in any way for not evolving the 2009 experience more than it does?

I say no. There's still room for improvement in a few spots, but overall Arkham City recaptures the magic of Rocksteady Studios' first Batman effort. This is an exceptional game and, for any warts you can find, it has more than earned its place as one of the 2011 frontrunners for Game of the Year honors.

Score: 9 out of 10

Man Gets 27 for Killing Infant During Video Game

A Tennessee man has been sentenced to 27 years in prison for killing his infant son because he bothered him during his video game.

Nineteen-year-old Andrew Keith Johnston pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in the death of his 1-month-old son.

Assistant District Attorney Mike Randles says Johnston gave a written statement saying he became irritated when the infant was crying in his bassinet, interfering with his playing of video games, The Shelbyville Times-Gazette reports.

The prosecutor says Johnston said he squeezed the boy hard and shook him.

A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Jobs' Memorial Salutes 'The Crazy Ones'

"Here's to the crazy ones, the misfits, the rebels, the troublemakers."

Those words in the Apple "Think Different" TV commercial hit the emotional center during a memorial service Wednesday for Apple co-founder and CEO Steve Jobs at company headquarters in Cupertino, Calif. According to CEO Tim Cook, Jobs himself wrote that script - a description of risk-takers who changed the world, a description which equally applied to himself.

The commercial includes images of world-changing rebels - Gandhi, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Albert Einstein and Bob Dylan, among others. According to an account in the San Jose Mercury News, when Cook played a recording of Jobs reading those lines, one employee noted that "suddenly you could hear everyone in the place trying to hold back tears." The employee added, "It was the best moment of the day."

Other speakers at the ceremony, which took place outside on the quad at the Apple campus, included former Vice President Al Gore, who is a member of the Apple board. Coldplay played "Fix You," and Norah Jones sang Bob Dylan's song, "Forever Young."

But while the "Think Different" commercial reading was emotional, the rest of the memorial was more festive. Cook's speech touched on his friendship with Jobs, and Gore's speech focused on the greatness of Apple as a company, and how Jobs created products that have an emotional attachment to customers. This, Gore said, is why his death has had such a resonance with so many people.

The company has reported that more than a million condolence messages have been left on its site since Jobs' death was announced. Some Apple retail stores were closed during the 90 minutes of the memorial so that employees could watch it remotely.

There had been reports that Jobs was working on Apple business during his last full day alive, a report that now appears to have been confirmed. SoftBank CEO Masayoshi Son said in a recent interview that, on the day the iPhone 4S was announced, Jobs called Tim Cook while Son was meeting with Cook. Cook said Jobs wanted to talk about their next product. Speculation is that the new product was the iPhone 5. Jobs passed away the next day.

Jobs died at age 56 on Oct. 5, following a fight with pancreatic cancer. On Oct. 7, a private funeral was held for the Apple visionary, and there was a large, private memorial service on Sunday at Stanford University.

The Sunday service included ex-President Bill Clinton, Gore, Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, Google co-founder Larry Page, singer Bono, News Corp. CEO Rupert Murdoch, actor Tim Allen, Oracle CEO Larry Ellison, Dell founder and CEO Michael Dell, Adobe co-founders John Warnock and Chuck Geschke, and others.

Jobs will continue to be remembered in countless large and small ways, not

the least of which will be a new authorized biography and, reportedly, a major feature film.

IRS Auditing How Google Shifted Profits

The U.S. Internal Revenue Service is auditing how Google Inc. avoided federal income taxes by shifting profit into offshore subsidiaries, according to a person with knowledge of the matter.

The agency is bringing more than typical scrutiny to how the company valued software rights and other intellectual property it licensed abroad, said the person, who requested anonymity because the audit isn't public. The IRS has requested information from Google about its offshore deals after three acquisitions, including its \$1.65 billion purchase of YouTube, the person said. The transfer overseas of these kinds of rights has enabled Google to attribute earnings to foreign units that pay lower taxes, Bloomberg News reported a year ago.

While Google's potential liability isn't clear, similar deals between companies and offshore arms are often the subject of disputes over hundreds of millions of dollars in taxes, said Daniel Frisch, an economist at Horst Frisch Inc. which advises businesses on transfer pricing- the allocation of income between units in different countries. In 2006, the IRS settled a case with drugmaker GlaxoSmithKline Plc for \$3.4 billion.

"The very biggest transfer-pricing tax disputes are over transfers of intangibles to offshore subsidiaries," said Frisch, whose firm is based in Washington.

Google, owner of the world's most popular search engine, has cut its worldwide tax bill by about \$1 billion a year using a pair of strategies called the 'Double Irish' and 'Dutch Sandwich,' which move profits through units in Ireland, the Netherlands and Bermuda. Google reported an effective tax rate of 18.8 percent in the second quarter, less than half the average combined U.S. and state statutory rate of 39.2 percent.

"This is a routine inquiry," said Jim Prosser, a spokesman for Mountain View, California-based Google. He declined to comment further.

Dean Patterson, a spokesman for the IRS in Washington, said federal law prohibits the agency from discussing specific taxpayers.

U.S. companies are sitting on at least \$1.375 trillion in earnings in their foreign subsidiaries on which they have paid no federal income taxes, according to a May report by JPMorgan Chase & Co. Companies including Google, Cisco Systems Inc., Pfizer Inc., Apple Inc. and Microsoft Corp. are lobbying Congress for a tax holiday on bringing home those profits, which would otherwise be subject to U.S. income tax at the 35 percent corporate rate with a credit for foreign taxes already paid.

The Obama administration is opposed to that tax break and has been stepping up criticism of tax preferences for various industries and millionaires. Last week, Senate Democrats proposed a new surtax on people earning at least \$1 million a year, a move that would generate an estimated \$453 billion over the coming decade.

The French tax authority also began reviewing Google's income shifting in December, examining transactions between the company's French and Irish subsidiaries, according to two people with knowledge of the probe. The French inquiry was prompted by the October 2010 Bloomberg article on the company's tax-cutting strategy, the people said.

A spokesman for the French budget ministry, which oversees the tax authority, declined to comment, saying the agency cannot discuss individual cases.

Multinational companies cut their tax bills by shifting earnings into subsidiaries in offshore tax havens, a strategy that is drawing increased scrutiny from the IRS.

In May, the IRS appointed its first transfer-pricing director, Samuel Maruca. Last year, it announced the assignment of additional agents and attorneys to examine a few large companies as part of a pilot program. The IRS wouldn't discuss whether Google is one of those companies.

Moving profit abroad is particularly important for cutting the tax bills of technology and pharmaceutical companies because of their valuable and easily transportable collection of patents and copyrights. Google, Cisco, Facebook Inc., Microsoft and Forest Laboratories Inc, maker of the blockbuster antidepressant Lexapro, have used tax-cutting strategies that move profits into units - often with no employees or offices - in havens such as Bermuda, the Cayman Islands and Switzerland, Bloomberg has reported.

In recent years, the IRS has engaged in a number of high profile disagreements with multinational companies over their transfer pricing. In 2006, the agency announced it was settling its dispute with GlaxoSmithKline.

In 2009, the IRS lost a closely watched U.S. Tax Court case with Veritas, now a part of computer-security software maker Symantec Corp. In that dispute, over intellectual property rights moved to an offshore subsidiary, the IRS sought \$545 million.

The win for Veritas was a major setback for the IRS's ability to enforce transfer-pricing rules, according to H. David Rosenbloom, an attorney at Caplin & Drysdale in Washington, and director of the International Tax program at New York University School of Law.

Income shifting by multinational companies cost the U.S. \$90 billion in federal tax revenue during 2008, according to a March article in the trade journal Tax Notes by Kimberly Clausing, an economics professor at Reed College in Portland, Oregon.

Google cuts its tax bill by about \$1 billion a year using a technique that allocates profits to a unit managed out of a law firm in Bermuda, where there is no corporate income tax. In 2009, the most recent year for which records are available, this subsidiary collected 4.34 billion euros (about \$6.1 billion) in royalties from a Google unit in the Netherlands, according to a Dutch corporate filing.

As of June 30, Google held \$18.8 billion in cash in its foreign subsidiaries, almost half its total \$39.1 billion in cash and marketable securities.

The IRS has already approved a major part of Google's strategy. In 2006,

the agency signed off on a 2003 intracompany transaction that moved foreign rights to its search technology to an Irish subsidiary managed in Bermuda called Google Ireland Holdings. That deal - known as a 'buy in' in tax parlance - meant subsequent profit overseas based on those copyrights has been attributed to foreign subsidiaries rather than to Google in the U.S. where the technology was developed.

The IRS approval came in an accord known as an advance pricing agreement. Those arrangements are part of an agency program intended to forestall disputes with companies, including disagreements over the price paid by offshore units for patent and other intellectual property rights.

That deal between the IRS and Google only covered rights the company held as of the 2003 licensing deal with its Irish unit. It didn't cover copyrights subsequently acquired by the U.S. parent and then moved abroad.

Following that 2003 transaction, Google made several acquisitions, spending \$1.65 billion for online-video site YouTube in 2006; \$625 million for e-mail security service Postini in 2007; and \$3.2 billion for web-advertising company DoubleClick Inc. in 2008. The IRS now is examining the prices paid by the foreign subsidiaries for the rights to software and other intangibles moved offshore that formerly belonged to those three companies.

According to U.S. Treasury Department rules, foreign units licensing rights from their U.S. parents are supposed to pay an 'arm's length' price, or the amount that would be paid by an unrelated company. If the offshore subsidiary pays too little, that has the effect of shifting income overseas, thus helping the parent avoid U.S. income taxes.

Google's taxes have also drawn government scrutiny from the Securities and Exchange Commission. Last December, the SEC asked the company for 'greater detail' about the profit it said it had earned in countries with lower tax rates and the impact on its effective tax rate, according to correspondence released by the agency in March. The SEC said in a February letter that it had completed its review of Google's filings. It is unclear what action, if any, the agency took.

In August, Google announced it was spending \$12.5 billion to acquire Motorola Mobility Holdings Inc., the Libertyville, Illinois telecom-equipment and mobile-phone maker. Google said it was doing the deal primarily for Motorola's collection of valuable patents. Prosser didn't respond to a question about whether Google would be moving any of those patent rights offshore.

Beijing Leaps to Defense of "Great Firewall of China"

China defended its right to censor the Internet on Thursday, saying it was necessary to "safeguard the public" after the United States pressed China to explain online curbs on U.S. companies.

The United States wants to know why the so-called "Great Firewall of China" blocks so many U.S. companies from providing services via the Internet, according to a letter obtained on Wednesday, another sign of growing trade tension between the world's two largest economies.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said China had actively encouraged

the development of the Internet and protected freedom of speech online.

"At the same time, in terms of China's lawful Internet management, its purpose is to maintain a good Internet environment and to safeguard public interest," Jiang told reporters. "These are in line with internationally accepted practices."

"We are willing to work with countries and communicate with them on the development of the Internet and to work together to promote the sound development of the Internet," she said. "But we do not accept using the excuse of 'Internet freedom' to interfere in other countries' internal practices."

She added that foreign companies were welcome to do business in the country.

The U.S. Ambassador to the World Trade Organization, Michael Punke, said in a letter to his Chinese counterpart on Monday that some companies based outside China had faced "challenges offering their services to Chinese customers" when their websites were blocked by China's "national firewall."

The latest dispute could bring Internet policy back to the foreground of U.S.-China relations, reprising tension from last year when the Obama administration took up Google's complaints about hacking and censorship from China.

Google partly pulled out of China after that dispute.

China, with more than 450 million Internet users, exercises tight control and censorship over the Web at home, and has strengthened its grip in recent months.

China bans numerous websites, including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube and some foreign media outlets, fearing the uncensored sharing of images and information could cause social instability and harm national security.

The Great Firewall of China can also cause blockage or slow loading of websites not subject to the ban, and is the source of widespread frustration to users in China.

Stand Up for Your Freedom To Install Free Software

The Free Software Foundation (FSF) released a statement open for public signing, titled "Stand up for your freedom to install free software."

The statement, published at <http://www.fsf.org/campaigns/secure-boot-vs-restricted-boot/statement>, is a response to Microsoft's announcement that if computer makers wish to distribute machines with the Windows 8 compatibility logo, they must implement a system called "Secure Boot." The FSF statement warns against the danger that, if done wrong, this system would have to be called Restricted Boot, because it could make computers incapable of running anything but Windows.

The technology in question aims to protect against malware by preventing unauthorized operating systems components from booting. Stopping

unauthorized tampering could be a feature, says the FSF, but only so long as it doesn't prevent users from intentionally running and modifying free software. If the boot system works in this fashion, then it deserves the name many are already calling it, "Secure Boot."

However, the FSF is concerned that Microsoft and hardware manufacturers will implement the system in a way that will prevent users from booting anything other than Windows. In this case, the FSF offers the more accurate name of Restricted Boot, explaining that such a requirement would be a severe restriction on computer users and, by giving only a remote third party control over what's authorized to run on their computers, not a security feature at all.

"We're looking at a world in which it could become impossible for the average user to install GNU/Linux on any new computer, so too much is at stake for us to wait and see if computer manufacturers will do the right thing. Secure Boot could all too easily become a euphemism for restriction and control by computer makers and Microsoft - freedom and security necessitate users being in charge of their own computers," said FSF executive director, John Sullivan.

Those signing the FSF's statement urge all computer makers implementing this system to resist any pressure to adopt Restricted Boot:

We, the undersigned, urge all computer makers implementing UEFI's so-called "Secure Boot" to do it in a way that allows free software operating systems to be installed. To respect user freedom and truly protect user security, manufacturers must either allow computer owners to disable the boot restrictions, or provide a sure-fire way for them to install and run a free software operating system of their choice.

Signers of the statement commit to "neither purchase nor recommend computers that strip users of this critical freedom," and to "actively urge people in our communities to avoid such jailed systems."

"I have been astounded by the number of people reaching out to us from all over the world, asking us to help build awareness and put pressure on computer manufacturers," said FSF campaigns manager, Joshua Gay. He added that "some of the people who contacted us expressed their nightmarish scenario of having even more hardware being tossed in landfills as a result of this," referring to the popular trend of reviving older hardware with GNU/Linux - something that would no longer be possible if more computers were locked by design into only running Windows.

A more detailed overview of the issue can be found at <http://www.fsf.org/campaigns/secure-boot-vs-restricted-boot/>.

Organizations interested in adding a prominent notice of their support should contact Joshua Gay at campaigns@fsf.org.

Copyright Czar Cozied Up to Big Content, E-mails Show

Top-ranking Obama administration officials, including the US copyright czar, played an active role in secret negotiations between Hollywood, the recording industry and ISPs to disrupt internet access for users suspected of violating copyright law, according to internal White House e-mails.

The e-mails, obtained via the Freedom of Information Act, show the administration's cozy relationship with Hollywood and the music industry's lobbying arms, and its early support for the copyright-violation crackdown system publicly announced in July.

One top official even used her personal e-mail account at least once during the negotiations with executives and lobbyists from companies ranging from AT&T to Universal Music.

Internet security and privacy researcher Christopher Soghoian obtained the e-mails via a government sunshine request for them filed in June, and provided them to Wired. The e-mails are linked at the end of this story.

The records show the government clearly had a voice in the closed-door negotiations, though it was not a signatory to the historic accord, which isn't an actual government policy.

The agreement includes participation by the US largest consumer internet providers including AT&T, Cablevision, Comcast, Time Warner and Verizon. It requires internet service providers, for the first time, to punish residential internet-service customers who media companies suspect are violating copyright rules by downloading copyrighted movies or music from peer-to-peer networks.

Those so-called 'mitigation measures' lobbied for by the record labels and Hollywood include reducing internet speeds and redirecting a subscriber's service to an 'educational' landing page for customers accused of copyright infringement. Internet providers may eliminate service altogether for people repeatedly accused of copyright infringement under what the deal calls 'graduated response.'

The e-mails do not entail much detail of the discussions between the administration and industry - as any substantive text in the e-mails was blacked out before being released to Soghoian.

But the communications show that a wide range of officials - from Vice President Joe Biden's deputy chief of staff Alan Hoffman, the Justice Department's criminal chief Lanny Breuer to copyright czar Victoria Espinel - were in the loop well ahead of the accord's unveiling.

"These kind of backroom voluntary deals are quite scary, particularly because they are not subject to judicial review. I wanted to find out what role the White House has played in the negotiation, but unfortunately, the OMB (Office of Management and Budget) withheld key documents that would shed further light on it," Soghoian said when asked why he sought the documents. He is appealing to OMB to disclose more e-mails.

The e-mails, some of which had the subject line 'counteroffer,' show off what seems to be a cordial and friendly two-way relationship between industry and the administration.

Alec French, NBC's top lobbyist, sent copyright czar Espinel an e-mail from his BlackBerry in January of last year, asking if she was "available for call this am?"

She promptly replied: "Btw, i only check my gmail intermittently now so much quicker to reach me on omb email," referring to her work e-mail address provided by the Office of Management and Budget. She said she was available for the call. Her personal e-mail address was redacted in the documents.

Espinell, whose position was created in 2008 as part of intellectual property reform legislation, declined in an e-mail to Wired to comment for this story. Instead, the President Barack Obama appointee referred Wired to the OMB press office. That office neither responded for comment nor replied to a follow-up e-mail.

First Came Stuxnet Computer Virus: Now There's Duqu

First there was the Stuxnet computer virus that wreaked havoc on Iran's nuclear program. Now comes "Duqu," which researchers on Tuesday said appears to be quite similar.

Security software firm Symantec said in a report it was alerted by a research lab with international connections on Friday to a malicious code that "appeared to be very similar to Stuxnet." It was named Duqu because it creates files with "DQ" in the prefix.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security said it was aware of the reports and was taking action.

"DHS' Industrial Control Systems Cyber Emergency Response Team has issued a public alert and will continue working with the cyber security research community to gather and analyze data and disseminate further information to our critical infrastructure partners as it becomes available," a DHS official said.

Symantec said samples recovered from computer systems in Europe and a detailed report from the unnamed research lab confirmed the new threat was similar to Stuxnet.

"Parts of Duqu are nearly identical to Stuxnet, but with a completely different purpose," Symantec said. "Duqu is essentially the precursor to a future Stuxnet-like attack."

Stuxnet is a malicious software that targets widely used industrial control systems built by German firm Siemens. It is believed to have crippled centrifuges Iran uses to enrich uranium for what the United States and some European nations have charged is a covert nuclear weapons program.

Cyber experts say its sophistication indicates that Stuxnet was produced possibly by the United States or Israel.

The new Duqu computer virus is designed to gather data from industrial control system manufacturers to make it easier to launch an attack in the future by capturing information including keystrokes.

"The attackers are looking for information such as design documents that could help them mount a future attack on an industrial control facility," Symantec said.

"Duqu does not contain any code related to industrial control systems and is primarily a remote access Trojan (RAT)," Symantec said. "The threat does not self-replicate."

Duqu shares "a great deal of code with Stuxnet" but instead of being designed to sabotage an industrial control system, the new virus is

designed to gain remote access capabilities.

"The creators of Duqu had access to the source code of Stuxnet," Symantec said.

Gmail Leaks Its New Redesign

The Gmail team unwittingly leaked a video showing off an update due for the email client in the near future. "We've been hard at work to update Gmail with a new look," says Google user experience designer Jason Cornwell in the video YouTube user "crlsndrsjmnz" managed to capture. "We've completely redesigned the look and feel of Gmail to make it as clean, simple and intuitive as possible."

For the most part, the adjustments seem relatively minor but offer improved flexibility and streamline the Google property with the new Google+ look (all good stuff, with the exception of more prevalent ads "we'll get to that"). There's been ample speculation that the update will coincide or preface Gmail-Google+ integration, a feature users of the fledgling social network have been calling for since day one.

New Gmail will auto-adapt to fit your browser window as you drag it into your preferred size. Take this a step further by customization how your inbox is displayed with new options under the gear icon. You can keep things nice and tight, allow more space per email, or choose the in-between. We're guessing netbook users out there will appreciate this update.

You can also determine what gets the most real estate on the left-hand sidebar, chat or inbox labels.

If you don't like the stark new Gmail, Google is also including the option to decorate the space. New high-res images will be available to personalize your email client's backdrop.

Conversations

This update is oddly reminiscent of Facebook Messages, where your every communication is linked to show an endless conversation. Gmail will now format your emails so that they read more like posts on a topic. Google says this will simultaneously improve readability and make it "feel more like a real conversation." And in yet another Facebook-like move, profile pictures will pop up in individual emails as well.

Searching your Gmail account will now drop down a number of features to help you find what you're looking for as quickly as possible. You can specify who something is from or to, its subject, what words are or aren't in it, whether it has an attachment, by date - or all of the above.

Of course, Google didn't point out the ad that managed to sneak its way into the video. It looks like Google will be introducing Smart Ads, which collect data over time to offer predictive marketing instead of just scanning the email you have open for keywords. It appears they will sit in below the reply box. Google's had something of a contentious relationship when it comes to ads in Gmail, and there could easily be user backlash to the latest change.

Search, Hammertime: M.C. Hammer Announces New Search Engine Wiredoo

You might remember M.C. Hammer as an oddly-dressed, harem pants-clad rapper from back in the 80s and 90s. But more recently, Hammer (or Stanley Kirk Burrell in real life) has been making his living as an entrepreneur. Among his ventures are a Mixed Martial Arts management company as well as, believe it or not, a new search engine called Wiredoo.

Burrell is a prolific Twitter user, with 2.25 million followers, so his interest in social media and technology in general isn't exactly a secret. But that doesn't mean announcing a search engine during this year's Web 2.0 Summit didn't catch us by surprise. He explains that Wiredoo isn't just about finding results through keywords - results from what Burrell calls "relationship search" are more in-depth.

He used the zip code 90210 as a search term example during his presentation. He claims that upon searching 90210, Wiredoo will be able to show comprehensive results compartmentalized into sections such as schools, homes, and crime rates. From there, you can dig deeper - clicking on schools, for instance, shows your average SAT scores and truancy rate.

Wiredoo (a project that's been in the works for two years) isn't meant to take on search giant Google. He says that he and his team are just putting Wiredoo out there because they believe it can be useful. You're out of luck if you want to know right now just how useful it can be, though - Wiredoo's target launch is the end of this quarter, so nobody can touch it yet.

Google+ Slow and Sure in Challenge to Facebook

Google remains undaunted in its bid to create a flourishing online community that can go toe-to-toe with social networking powerhouse Facebook.

The California Internet titan's popular products and services will increasingly be woven into its nascent but fast-growing Google+ social network to make joining irresistible, executives said Thursday.

"We are in an enviable position that we have people who come to Google," Vic Gundotra, vice president in charge of Google+, said at a Web 2.0 Summit in San Francisco.

"We are in this for the long haul... By Christmas you will see Google+ strategy coming together."

Google+ has attracted more than 40 million users since it opened to the public about a month ago, but has a long way to catch up with Facebook's membership of approximately 800 million.

In the coming days, programs offered as online services at Google Apps will work with Google+ accounts, which will eventually synch with other popular offerings such as YouTube.

Google plans to eventually open its social networking platform to outside developers to make games and other kinds of installable "apps" that have

been part of Facebook's success, according to Gundotra.

Google+ will also eventually allow people to use pseudonyms on accounts instead of their real names, he said, touching on one of the criticisms of the social network.

Google is moving slowly and cautiously to make sure its social network is a safe, stable haven for families, friends, and other associates who connect with one another in "circles" created at the service.

Gundotra acknowledged that Facebook has the advantage of a "network affect," in that complex webs of friends are established there and people might find it daunting to up and relocate to Google+.

"The incumbent has a huge advantage," Gundotra said. "If you play the same game, you are not going to win... So we are going to do it differently."

Differently, for Google+, includes giving users more discretion regarding what they share and with whom.

"We do not believe in over-sharing," Gundotra said.

"There is a reason why every thought in your head does not come out your mouth... We think a core attribute to being human is to curate."

Google+ launched with a requirement that people use their real names online in order to let others find them more easily, according to executives.

"We wanted this to be a product where you can discover people you know," Gundotra said. "You don't know 'Captain Crunch' or 'Dog Fart'."

Google co-founder Sergey Brin said that he initially thought Google+ was too complicated, but has come to like the online community that lets users create "circles" of contacts depending on intimacy.

"I have connected with friends who I haven't touched base with in a while," Brin said at the summit.

"I wasn't able to do that with existing services because of the way the sharing models worked," he said in an indirect reference to social networking king Facebook. "It just didn't work for me."

Brin said that Google has been streamlining its product line and merging offerings under the leadership of fellow co-founder Larry Page, who replaced Eric Schmidt as chief executive earlier this year.

"I completely agree that some of our products and services seemed scattered over the past few years, and we definitely have been trying to bring them together," Brin said.

"In some ways, we have always run the company as 'let a thousand flowers bloom,' but once they do bloom, you want to put together a coherent bouquet."

Brin added that he was happy in his new role working on special projects, such as Google's self-driving car, and getting to be the "peanut gallery" when Page is grappling with executive decisions.

Myspace Purchase A 'Huge Mistake': Murdoch

News Corp.'s purchase of Myspace was a "huge mistake" and the social network was mismanaged "in every possible way" following the acquisition, chief executive Rupert Murdoch said Friday.

Murdoch, addressing shareholders at the media and entertainment company's annual meeting in Los Angeles, said News Corp.'s 2005 purchase of Myspace for \$580 million was seen as "fantastic" at the time.

"We paid \$600 million," Murdoch said. "We could have sold it for \$6 billion a month later."

Myspace, however, was quickly eclipsed by Facebook, which has grown to more than 800 million members as Myspace's numbers have dwindled.

"I made a huge mistake," Murdoch said of the Myspace acquisition.

"We then proceeded to mismanage it in every possible way," he said, adding that "all of the people concerned with it are no longer with the company."

News Corp. sold Myspace in June for \$35 million, just six percent of its purchase price, to Specific Media, a digital ad-targeting platform.

Murdoch also defended News Corp. during the meeting from criticisms by shareholders angry about a phone-hacking scandal in Britain that led to the closure of the tabloid weekly The News of the World.

=~::~~==

Atari Online News, Etc. is a weekly publication covering the entire Atari community. Reprint permission is granted, unless otherwise noted at the beginning of any article, to Atari user groups and not for profit publications only under the following terms: articles must remain unedited and include the issue number and author at the top of each article reprinted. Other reprints granted upon approval of request. Send requests to: dpj@atarinews.org

No issue of Atari Online News, Etc. may be included on any commercial media, nor uploaded or transmitted to any commercial online service or internet site, in whole or in part, by any agent or means, without the expressed consent or permission from the Publisher or Editor of Atari Online News, Etc.

Opinions presented herein are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the staff, or of the publishers. All material herein is believed to be accurate at the time of publishing.